

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**F-15C 81-0027**  
**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD**  
**TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA**  
**21 May 2004**

On 21 May 2004, F-15C, S/N 81-0027, assigned to the 325th Fighter Wing at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, crashed approximately 50 nautical miles southeast of Tyndall Air Force Base. At approximately 11:57:15 local (CST), during a three-thousand-foot defensive basic fighter maneuvers engagement, the mishap pilot (MP) was ejected from the mishap aircraft (MA). The MA continued to fly for approximately one minute and forty-nine seconds before it impacted the ground along the marshy shoreline of St. George Island, Florida. The MA was destroyed upon impact, but there was no other damage to government property. The MP, an instructor pilot and flight examiner, suffered only superficial injuries. Some local property owners have indicated they suffered minor property damage caused by the impact, and one individual has indicated he sustained minor injuries as a result of the impact.

There is clear and convincing evidence that the following, in sequence, caused the accident:

- The MP's connector to regulator unit (CRU-94/P), an air regulating valve, became detached from the torso harness dovetail bracket, the device that attaches the CRU-94/P to the pilot's torso harness; additionally, the MP's combat edge vest hose, the hose that provides air to the pilot's combat edge vest, was not attached to the CRU-94/P;
- The MP's detached CRU-94/P became lodged in the cavity of the ejection seat right handle;
- The MP turned his head to the right to look over his right shoulder to view his six o'clock high position and pulled the stick back toward him; and
- The MP's movement placed enough tension on the oxygen hose and CRU-94/P to raise the ejection seat handle and initiate the ejection sequence.

It is unclear how the CRU-94/P became detached; however, clear and convincing evidence indicates the mishap was caused when the CRU-94/P became detached from the torso harness dovetail bracket and set off the chain of events that led to the initiation of the ejection sequence, which ultimately led to the crash of the MA.

*Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d) any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.*